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President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 9.10 a.m.

High-level plenary meeting on the theme "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward"

Agenda item 57

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

(a) New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/130)

Draft resolution (A/63/L.1)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly, pursuant to resolutions 61/229 of 22 December 2006 and 62/242 of 4 March 2008, will convene under sub-item (a) of agenda item 57, a high-level meeting on the theme "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward".

Statement by the President

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a privilege for me to welcome participants to this first substantive meeting of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly. I am particularly pleased that we are beginning our collective work with an issue as urgent as Africa's development needs, the status of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward.

At the Millennium Summit we decided to devote special attention to Africa's development needs because, to a great extent, throughout history the African continent has endured sacrifice, plunder, slaughter and, finally, oblivion. Considering the irreparable injustices of history and the inherent ravages of colonization, in September 2000 we made a collective commitment to our African sisters and brothers.

Almost a decade later, it is time to assess the progress made towards the goals we set in the Millennium Declaration. In that regard, Africa has undeniably made considerable democratic advances with the holding of elections and the establishment of elected Governments all across that fair continent.

I would especially like to welcome the establishment of the African Union in 2000 and the launching of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which were undoubtedly milestones in Africa's history and in the empowerment of its own political, economic and social development process.

Without listing Africa's many achievements in good governance, which are described in detail in the Secretary-General's report (A/63/130), I would like to highlight the African Peer Review Mechanism, a self-monitoring instrument in which African leaders are reviewed by their peers on all aspects of good governance, human rights, macroeconomic policies and so forth.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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I also want to stress that Africa, in addition to ratifying the United Nations Convention against Corruption, has adopted the African Union Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Corruption, which has now been ratified by all African Union members.

Africa has amply fulfilled its own political, economic and social commitments. However, if it is to consolidate the progress made and reach our goal of empowering Africa to meet the development challenges it faces, the international community, especially donor countries and the Bretton Woods institutions, must fully honour their commitments and substantially complement the efforts of the African nations.

Africa's challenges are indeed still enormous. Brave as its nations may be — and we know that they are — Africa cannot move ahead on its own. The African countries' gains in terms of economic growth are real, but they must be decisively strengthened through concrete actions, such as the provision of more substantial external debt relief. The relative progress made in that area cannot obscure the unfair conditionalities that the Bretton Woods institutions and creditor countries continue to impose. Those conditionalities have the perverse effect not only of preventing the effective implementation of poverty reduction programmes, but also of eroding the living conditions of tens of millions of people, driving them deeper into the poverty from which those institutions were supposed to save them.

Africa's integration into the global economy also requires that it be guaranteed access to the international market. Beyond modest aid-for-trade efforts, the key to providing full access to trade lies in eliminating the developed countries' practice of subsidizing their industries, and especially their agricultural producers.

The failure of the Doha trade talks clearly illustrates the limits of that free-market doctrine, to which a few players have subjected the rest of the world. Those same proponents of extreme liberalism change their tune at the first sign that their economic might could be at risk and that their citizens could suffer the pain they inflict on others.

I therefore once again call for us to work together in fraternal solidarity to eliminate the market distortions generated by the subsidies of developed countries, as these have played a key role in worsening the global food crisis we are experiencing. We must join forces to eliminate those and other structural factors that are endangering the lives of millions of people.

Of course, that crisis has had a terrible impact on African populations and has extinguished what little hope there was of halving by 2015 the proportion of people on the African continent suffering from hunger. In that connection, it is imperative to transfer the necessary technology to give African countries new instruments to guarantee food for life, food security and food sovereignty. Such transfers are equally urgent for ensuring that the African countries' adaptation to the devastating consequences of climate change is not just a hope but a reality.

I would also like to recall that the principle of shared but differentiated responsibility is a cornerstone of the international commitments concerning sustainable development. That principle places developed countries under a moral and legal obligation to honour their many sustainable development commitments, including those relating to the transfer of technology. From an ethical standpoint, that need is all the more pressing in that it is completely at odds with the massive and astonishing wealth that multinational extractive industries generate from African land, flesh and blood, without producing diversified foreign direct investment in return for that wealth and at times the pillaging of those assets.

Helping Africa to boost its capacity to combat infectious diseases, I am certain, must begin with measures to give the entire population access to clean drinking water. Water purification and universal access would curb the spread of many diseases and reduce the number of children and women who die each day for lack of clean water.

Given that there are nearly 25 million people living with AIDS in Africa, saying that Africa has made progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS is cold comfort, but it should nonetheless encourage us to continue to mobilize international efforts to step up prevention initiatives and extend universal access to antiretroviral treatment throughout Africa. Preventing Africa's decimation by the AIDS pandemic is not only a sine qua non for its future development; it is also a moral obligation that all humankind has towards Africa.

In the light of the comments I have just made, I would like to recall that the commitments in the area of

financing for development entered into in the sisterly city of Monterrey, especially those pertaining to official development assistance, are still in force and are undeniably urgent. I therefore call upon the world's rich countries to redouble their efforts to bring official development assistance — which dropped from 0.33 per cent of gross domestic product in 2005 to 0.28 per cent in 2007 — closer to the Monterrey commitment of 0.7 per cent. I wish to remind members that the goal was first proposed by the Assembly itself in 1970. In the same vein, given the current levels of disbursement, I ask the members of the Group of Eight, with all the force of my position as President of the General Assembly, to deliver on the pledge they made at Gleneagles in 2005 to double official development assistance for Africa by 2010.

The cry of Africa's peoples, who yearn not only to survive but to live lives of dignity in decent conditions, does not require that we make new commitments, but only that we simply have the courage to live up to the words we have spoken many times over at the Rio, Copenhagen, Beijing, Cairo, New York and Monterrey summits. It is time to move from promises to concrete action. What we are witnessing is a state of emergency. Let us answer this challenge with the steadfastness and courage that the African peoples are asking of us.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: I am grateful to the many heads of State or Government and other high-level representatives for attending this very historic meeting. The event is important in itself, but it is also critical to our preparations for the high-level meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be held on Thursday and the Doha Review Conference on Financing for Development, which will start in Qatar in late November.

No one is more alarmed than the members of the General Assembly at the current trends, which indicate that no African country will achieve all the Goals by 2015. But I am convinced that, through concerted action by African Governments and their development partners, the MDGs remain achievable in Africa. That is one of my highest priorities as Secretary-General. I convened the MDG Africa Steering Group in 2007 to galvanize international support, bringing together eight of the main multilateral institutions working on development with Africa.

Through the work of the Steering Group and other efforts, we now have a good idea of what is needed. It will cost about $72 billion per year in external financing to achieve the Goals by 2015. That price tag may look daunting. But it is affordable and falls within existing aid commitments. Just consider the fact that member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) spent an estimated $267 billion last year on agricultural subsidies alone.

In this context, the cost of solving the food crisis, addressing global warming and pulling millions out of extreme poverty in Africa looks like good value. I appeal to all donors to implement the 2005 Gleneagles summit pledge to more than double aid to Africa.

We need to provide insecticide-treated bednets. We must improve maternal health, the slowest-moving of the MDGs. We must make sure every child has access to free primary education.

I also urge all Member States to agree on clear steps to follow up on the outcome of this high-level event.

(spoke in French)

Increasingly volatile weather conditions are taking their toll on African agriculture. Ethiopia is a case in point. The country is currently facing a severe drought in its south-eastern regions and severe flooding in its south-western regions. That implies that the effects of climate change are already with us. It is sadly ironic that the poor — who contribute the least to global warming — suffer most from its ill effects. Climate change is also leading to competition and conflict over natural resources. Many of these conflicts are local for the moment, but if unchecked, they could spin out of control.

Tackling these challenges is not just a moral imperative. The recent spate of conflicts over food and natural resources shows that our security depends on building prosperity in the developing world. Peace, development and respect for basic human rights go hand in hand. As we seek to build roads, bridges and schools, we also work to prevent war and build peace.

We are exploring new ways to stabilize fragile peace processes in Burundi, the Democratic Republic

of the Congo and the Sudan. The Peacebuilding Commission has provided support for Sierra Leone, Burundi and Liberia. Development can now progress in those countries, where only recently prospects were indeed dim.

(*spoke in English*)

Achieving peace and building trust require patience and perseverance. Let me pay tribute to the people of Zimbabwe for negotiating a Government of national unity. Similar perseverance is needed to resolve other crises, such as those in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia.

Crucially, the United Nations is strengthening and deepening cooperation with the African Union in peace and security, mediation and conflict prevention. The joint African Union-United Nations Panel on Peacekeeping has started exploring how the international community can support peace operations in Africa. We welcome the ongoing efforts to establish an African standby force.

But at the same time, multiple challenges continue to take a terrible toll: the impact of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis; the millions of school-age children deprived of basic education; the widespread violence against women; and the suffering of innocent people in Darfur and Somalia. Extreme poverty is still causing needless deaths and stopping millions of promising young Africans from fulfilling their potential.

We have before us several reports indicating that Africa's progress is not on track. We also have several reports telling us what needs to be done for Africa to change its course. Let this be the day when we begin implementing those recommendations in earnest. Let us leave this Hall with a strengthened commitment to change the course of history and bring hope and development to Africa and the entire world.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

Members will recall that in operative paragraph 4 of resolution 62/242 of 4 March 2008, the Assembly requested the President of the General Assembly to finalize the organizational arrangements for the meeting.

Address by Mr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania and Chairman of the African Union

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania and Chairman of the African Union.

President Kikwete: I thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for conceiving the idea of holding this high-level meeting devoted to discussing Africa's development needs. I also congratulate the Secretary-General on his report on Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward (A/63/130).

Africa deserves this kind of attention because it is the poorest of the five continents. With respect to human development indicators, Africa scores the lowest on almost all of them. The Secretary-General's report quite extensively and competently covers Africa's needs and challenges for development. Certainly, numerous studies, publications and multilateral conferences have elucidated and arrived at a consensus as to what constitutes Africa's development, what impedes it and what needs to be done about it. The list of Africa's development needs is long, from provision of basic social and economic services to ensuring food security and increasing people's incomes through transformation of the productive sectors.

The Secretary-General effectively reminds us in his report that one critical thing that is preventing Africa's development needs from being met is a lack of the requisite resources. Development requires huge amounts of resources. Unfortunately, because of its lower level of development, Africa does not have sufficient resources to pull itself out of the poverty trap. The Secretary-General's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Africa Steering Group has, among other things, quantified development assistance needs with a view to meeting the MDGs, which forms the backbone of Africa's development challenges.

One good thing about those facts is that all of us in the international community and on the continent recognize Africa's acute resource constraints. We also know that African Governments have been taking measures to tackle the development challenges using

the few resources available to them. Another good thing is the fact that the international community has been generous enough to assist African nations with resources to complement their efforts. Unfortunately, the resources being committed and made available are not sufficient to lift Africa out of the poverty trap quickly. One unfortunate thing is the fact that many of the resources promised by the developed countries are not being provided.

I would like to take this opportunity to express Africa's disappointment at the failure of the developed nations to honour their commitments to provide resources to deal with the challenges of Africa's development. Allow me to use this forum today to call for a new impetus in meeting those commitments. It is the historic duty and a moral obligation of the developed nations to help the needy in Africa; it is not a question of charity.

As we meet here today, it is important to recall the Monterrey Consensus, adopted by heads of State and Government in March 2002. The Consensus provided a key framework for the financing of development. We in Africa saw the adoption of the Consensus as an important step in scaling up efforts to mobilize domestic and external resources for our development and that of other needy developing nations on this planet.

It is only prudent that, as we elevate Africa's development agenda as a matter of global concern, we take stock of where we are in the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus and other decisions taken and commitments made in various forums. I am delighted to note the efforts of the Secretariat and the General Assembly in that respect, particularly through the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development that took place here in New York in October 2007 and the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, which will take place in Doha later this year.

We in Africa are appreciative of the various efforts made in recent years to address the challenges of financing Africa's development needs. Those efforts are reflected in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the communiqué adopted at the 2005 Gleneagles summit of the Group of Eight (G8). We are also thankful to the G8 countries for paying increasing attention to the development issues affecting Africa.

However, while all those efforts have provided additional momentum for the implementation of the commitments made by world leaders in the Monterrey Consensus, we in Africa are increasingly concerned at the persistent gap between what has been promised and what has been delivered. Collectively, the G8 is badly off track to fulfil its development assistance promises to Africa. I am told that, in total, G8 assistance to sub-Saharan Africa has increased by only $2.3 billion since 2004, whereas it should have increased by $5.4 billion during that period. If current trends continue, African countries will not be able to mobilize the resources required to finance the public investments critical to achieving the MDGs. Now is the time for the friends of Africa in the developed world to walk the walk. If they do not do so now, it may be too late as far as meeting the 2015 targets is concerned.

The amount of aid provided is as important as the quality of that aid. While we appreciate the fact that some of the developed countries have stepped up their efforts to meet their commitments, one concern for us in Africa is that most of the recent decrease in aid is due to debt relief and humanitarian assistance, and so does not reflect additional resources available to finance development programmes. Indeed, when those two components of aid are removed, it is clear that there has not been any significant change in real aid flows since 2004. Therefore, if donors are to meet their pledges to double aid flows to Africa by 2010, there has to be a significant scaling-up of aid this year, next year and the year after that.

Before I conclude, I would like to underscore the fact that Africa is not a hopeless case. We are not desperate, nor have we resigned ourselves to a state of helplessness. We are determined to wrestle ourselves out of our predicament. All we are saying is that we need the support of the developed members of the international community to complement our efforts. We thank our development partners for the invaluable support extended to us over many years, but much more needs to be done. That is all we are asking. It can be done; let us all play our part.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the President of the United Republic of Tanzania and Chairperson of the African Union for the statement he has just made.

Address by Mr. Nicolas Sarkozy, President of the French Republic and President of the Council of the European Union

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the French Republic and President of the Council of the European Union.

President Sarkozy (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to thank the Secretary-General for the very comprehensive report that he has prepared on Africa's development needs (A/63/130).

Africa is on the move once again. The continent has found its way back to the path of growth. Since 1994, its average annual growth has been nearly 5 per cent. It is still accelerating today and should be more than 6 per cent in 2008. Happily, the volume of external investment has just exceeded that of official development assistance (ODA). The perception of Africa is changing.

However, that economic growth remains very abstract for a majority of Africans. A statistical reality, it is not yet an everyday reality for Africa's populations. Indeed, the African continent faces many challenges, including the food crisis and the effects of climate change. Above all, there is the assessment made in the Secretary-General's report — an assessment that should challenge all of us — that not one African country — not one — is on track to meet all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Europe wants to be involved alongside Africa. Recently, the 27 States members of the European Union (EU) collectively reaffirmed their very clear commitments with regard to aid. We confirmed the EU's objective of devoting 0.7 per cent of its wealth to ODA by 2015. That is a true action agenda that has been established and that we will discuss on 25 September at the special High-level Event on the MDGs proposed by the Secretary-General. We would like to go even further in the case of the global partnership for agriculture and food.

But let this be quite clear: The aid that Europe has agreed on for Africa is not simply from the heart; it is entirely rational, because we Europeans know that development assistance to Africa is first and foremost an investment in our common future. The globalized world needs a developed Africa. The European Union, a direct neighbour of the continent of Africa, needs a developed Africa.

What would be the use of working towards security and stability for Europe without at the same time seeking to bridge the existing development gap between Europe and Africa? It would be a delusion to envisage Europe's prosperity without working at the same time for the emergence of a major economic partner, located 14 kilometres from the European coast, whose population in 2030 will be greater than that of India or China. It is a delusion to seek world food security without making the most of Africa's agricultural resources so that it can feed itself, first and foremostt, but also help to feed the world.

That is why we will continue to work to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. There are still over 70 million children who must be sent to school in Africa; 900 million people in Africa suffer from under-nutrition and malnutrition; 23 million in Africa are living with AIDS; and every five minutes, 10 African children die of malaria. That is why education and health will remain at the very centre of our strategies for African aid.

We must, however, be clear about something else. Meeting the Millennium Development Goals is essential, but it is not enough to have a lasting impact on poverty, ensure growth in Africa and create jobs. We must help Africa to transform its agriculture, particularly its family agriculture. Africa needs not one but two Green Revolutions — one to increase yields and one to protect the environment.

Private initiative must be unleashed in Africa. Businesses, in particular small and medium-sized businesses, have the greatest capacity to create jobs, yet Africa does not have enough of them. The President of Liberia, Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf, recently suggested putting the private sector at the centre of development efforts and supplementing the Millennium Development Goals with goals for competitiveness in development. I can only endorse that welcome proposal.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development, agreed by Africa itself, was the first to affirm the close link between governance, growth and poverty reduction. Good management of public affairs is essential to bringing about an African renaissance.

Development implies essential political preconditions. There will be no development without peace, there will be no development without security, and there will be no development without the accountability of those who govern to their citizens. I would like to denounce any temptation to present transparency and respect for the rule of law as unnecessary foreign conditions imposed by donors. Democracy and respect for human rights are deep-seated aspirations of the African peoples themselves. Were they not, after all, the driving motive behind the wars for independence and the struggle against apartheid waged by the Africans themselves?

To conclude, I would like to make an appeal that is valid for all of us. Together, let us avoid repeating the errors of the past. I am thinking first and foremost of the issue of debt. Our collective efforts since the end of the 1990s have reduced the continent's external debt by a factor of four. Because Africa's debt has been thus reduced, it has recovered some room to manoeuvre in the social sectors and for public investments. In the future, let us guard against a public re-indebtedness that is too rapid and too costly. Let us not set the stage today for a new African debt crisis in 2030.

I am also thinking of the utilization and sustainable management of natural resources in Africa. Just because the terms of trade have improved does not mean that Africa should be locked into the export of raw materials alone.

Lastly, both donors and recipients of aid must increase their efforts to coordinate and harmonize their efforts. At a time when the Secretary-General is recommending that we step up recourse to budget support, why do we see new donors — who are, of course, welcome — increasing project aid? Europeans and Africans have agreed on de-linking aid. Why then should we go back on that principle with regard to donors from other continents? The same causes will repeat the same effects. Let us not repeat the errors of the past.

We are all aware of the fact that Africa is at a turning point today. Africa must be able to take full advantage of the new opportunities being presented to it. It is in our common interest that it succeed in that. I reaffirm that Europe as a whole will be at Africa's side to promote the development in Africa that is so needed by the world so that we can live in peace, prosperity and stability.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the President of the French Republic and President of the Council of the European Union.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus.

Ms. Wieczorek-Zeul (Germany): I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to address the Assembly in my capacity as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, to take place at the end of November in Doha, Qatar.

I am very moved to be able to address the Assembly, because I myself participated in the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, held in 2000, devoted to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and in the Monterrey Conference, where we decided on the Millennium Development Goals and on financing for development.

We have heard this morning that the world is challenged by new situations and by events that pose a threat to human lives and development achievements. There are three major crises — food, fuel and finance — and climate change, which has an impact on all three. We also note that there is a mixed record halfway to the MDGs, especially in Africa. There is light and shade; there are achievements and disappointments. And light, to a certain extent, exists in terms of making achievements in the fight against malaria through concerted action in some African countries, which shows that progress is possible, if we join all our efforts.

But I would also like to say that, for me and I think for everyone else in this Hall and outside it, it is completely unacceptable that the risk of a woman dying because of pregnancy or childbirth is 300 times higher in Africa than in industrialized countries. That, for me, means that we have to be active in ensuring access to medical and health services and to family planning possibilities in order to save the lives of women and children.

We will be able to reach the MDGs only through an extra effort: an effort on the part of all donor countries, all development partners and the African countries themselves. The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the resolution of global problems will be possible only if there is a working global partnership, with Africa as a strong player: we have heard its voice this morning.

But this high-level meeting is just one step, and the forthcoming high-level meeting on the MDGs is another. The following step will be the conference in Doha, Qatar, at the end of November, on financing for development. We will have to reinforce confidence in the partnership which we launched at Monterrey. To be successful on its path, Africa needs true partners, considerable investment and predictable funding. It is vital that the Group of Eight deliver on the pledges made in Gleneagles, namely to double aid for Africa by 2010, bringing it to $50 billion. I can say that Germany will fulfil its pledge.

The new challenges call for new ideas, new sources of financing, new forms of cooperation and new rules, specifically for financial markets. We need innovative financing instruments, as we discussed at Monterrey. One particularly promising approach, which Germany is pioneering, is to use revenues from the auctioning of carbon credits for development and adaptation processes.

Let me quote some figures that fill me and others with concern. In 2008, the least developed countries alone will have spent an extra $50 billion on oil; that is more than they get in official development assistance. And since many countries are suffering from high food and energy prices, I am advocating that countries and businesses that make profits invest a proportion of them in development. The international community should establish an agro-facility for that purpose in order to help those countries that are the hardest hit by high oil and food prices.

The current crisis in the banking system is related to the lack of transparency in financial markets. We need to prevent our development efforts from being swept away by the tide of financial markets. We need a reliable regulatory framework for the global financial markets, with binding rules on transparency.

There is also an urgent need for international action on taxation. Tax avoidance and tax flight are costing developing countries an estimated $500 billion a year in lost revenues. That is five times global official development assistance. The industrialized countries are losing another $500 billion. We therefore need to strengthen our efforts to build efficient and fair tax systems both in developing countries and in developed countries, and we need an international compact to fight tax flight and evasion.

I firmly believe that, if we boldly address these financing issues, we can achieve all the Millennium Development Goals — including in Africa. The Doha Conference in November must be a success. As the Special Envoy, I will personally be doing everything possible to ensure that it is. And I call on members please to participate at the highest possible level and to ensure that civil society participates as well. It will be a great chance, in this specific situation, to help save the world from hunger and from poverty. I think we should combine all our possibilities and all our forces to engage in this fight, the only fight that counts. We can be successful.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany for her statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Yoshiro Mori, Special Envoy of the Government of Japan.

Mr. Mori (Japan) (*spoke in Japanese; interpretation provided by the delegation*): In recent years, the continent of Africa has been invigorated as it experienced unprecedented economic growth and achieved increasing political stability. The result is that we now have an opportunity to achieve real and sustainable economic growth and to eradicate poverty, in order to turn a page and make the twenty-first century the century of African growth.

At the same time, Africa faces major problems and new challenges in the form of poverty, unemployment, soaring food prices, insufficient access to energy, climate change, recurring conflicts and violence and HIIV/AIDS. The Millennium Development Goals Report 2008, issued in August, predicts that it will be difficult to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa by the deadline we have set for ourselves.

In the face of these challenges, I believe it is time for the international community to come together and

enhance its support for African efforts to achieve growth and stability, to ensure human security — a concept I addressed at the Millennium Summit in 2000 (see A/55/PV.6) — and to make the most of the opportunity Africa has today to become a continent of truly vibrant nations.

As members know, Japan held the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in May of this year and the Group of Eight (G8) Hokkaido Toyako summit in July. Representatives from 51 African countries, 34 donor and Asian countries, and 77 international organizations participated in TICAD IV. I co-chaired the Conference with Prime Minister Fukuda and led discussions with African leaders on many of the issues I have just referred to. To be specific, we took up four issues and, based on the outcome of our discussion, adopted the Yokohama Declaration, which consisted of the following messages.

First, in order to strengthen the current trend of economic growth in Africa and to accelerate its growth, we will support the work that is being done to enhance infrastructure, human resources development, agriculture and trade and investment.

Secondly, we shall continue to assist African countries in the areas of community development, education, health, and water and sanitation, with a view to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Thirdly, we shall support the efforts Africa is making to consolidate peace, which is the prerequisite of economic growth, and to promote good governance, through which the profits from growth may be allocated to the poor. Fourthly, we shall support African countries in their efforts to address environmental and climate change issues in order to promote sustainable economic growth.

As chair of the G8, Japan ensured that the discussion at the G8 Hokkaido Toyako summit in July reflected the outcome of TICAD IV. In the Hokkaido Toyako summit leaders' declaration, the G8 articulated the specific measures it would take to support the nations of Africa, focusing on the areas of health, water and sanitation, and education. For its part, Japan announced at TICAD IV the measures it would take to support Africa, including doubling its official development assistance to African countries by the year 2012 and providing support with a view to doubling private investment within the same time frame.

Allow me to say a few words about the new idea that we arrived at in TICAD IV. At the conference, a number of African countries pointed out that, although the international community had made many commitments, follow-up remained inadequate. To address that problem, we formulated the Yokohama Action Plan, which summarized the measures countries had pledged to take, and announced the establishment of the Yokohama Follow-up Mechanism, which would produce periodic reports on the progress of implementation and ensure that they were reviewed and evaluated at the ministerial level. Japan intends to take advantage of the Mechanism in the implementation of its own assistance to Africa.

This month, Japan immediately implemented one of the commitments it made at TICAD IV by dispatching joint missions to Africa with a view to promoting trade and investment between Japan and African countries. One objective is to study how Japan could provide support through its official development assistance programmes in effectively assisting the promotion of trade and investment to accelerate the growth of African nations. Japan is also determined to steadily implement the commitments it has made in the fields of health, water and sanitation, education and food with a view to realizing the MDGs.

Finally, I would like to touch on the single most important pair of concepts which I believe the international community must be guided by in the area of African development. I am referring to African ownership and to the partnership of the international community, which are linked ideas Japan has long stressed and worked to make realities.

Whether it comes from donor countries or international organizations, the assistance that development partners provide should conform to the real needs of African countries. For assistance to conform to needs, it is necessary for there to be a dialogue. At the same time, if the assistance that partners provide is to be both effective and efficient, it is clearly essential that earnest efforts be made on the African side. African countries have to muster the political will to meet such challenges as formulating sound economic, development and poverty-reduction policies, consolidating peace and achieving good governance. With the overarching goals of ownership

and partnership always in mind, Japan stands ready to work with every country and organization represented here today to make the twenty-first century truly the century of African growth.

Allow me to conclude my remarks by expressing the heartfelt hope that the discussions we have here at today's high-level meeting will be fruitful and constructive.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda and Chairman of the Group of 77, His Excellency Mr. John Ashe.

Mr. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda): I am pleased to deliver this address on behalf of my Prime Minister, The Honourable Mr. Winston Baldwin Spencer, Chairman of the Group of 77 for 20υ8. In that capacity, I am indeed honoured and privileged to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Group attaches great importance to this high-level plenary meeting on the theme "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward".

The development needs and challenges confronting the African continent are well known, deep-seated and fundamental. The international community has focused on those needs and challenges in a number of international conferences and summits, including the Millennium Conference, the International Conference on Financing for Development, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the 2005 World Summit. There have also been a number of plurilateral and bilateral initiatives directed to Africa. Africa itself has undertaken many initiatives to further its development.

We have recognized that addressing Africa's development needs and challenges requires internal action and very significant international cooperation and facilitation in the form of resources, technology and a supporting international environment. We have committed ourselves in declarations, resolutions and plans of action to stand with Africa in the struggle to meet those needs and overcome the challenges.

The Secretary-General's comprehensive report (A/63/130) submitted for this high-level meeting and the recommendations of his MDG Africa Steering Group have made one thing abundantly clear: If fully implemented, existing international commitments could take African countries closer to achieving t Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and lay t foundation for robust economic growth throughout t continent. The focus — indeed, the mantra — of th high-level meeting should and must therefore implementation. The question we should all a ourselves is: How do we implement our commitmer to Africa?

African countries have done a great deal change the image of the continent, to mobili domestic resources, to attract private capital and enhance accountability and democratic governanc Some African countries raised domestic revenue as share of their gross domestic product by 6.9 per ce between 1996 and 2006, according to the Internatior Monetary Fund. They have committed to minimu public expenditure targets in key sectors, includi agriculture. They have shown tremendous leadership recent years and are putting in place ambitio programmes and strategies to develop and involve th private sector.

The obvious question to us is: Has t international community delivered on its commitmer More important, have we provided the committed promised assistance in the following areas: offic development assistance (ODA) to Africa — t Gleneagles promise alone was to increase ODA Africa by $25 billon per year by 2010; debt relief f all African countries that carry a heavy debt burde and an international trade environment that allows level playing field for African agricultural exports su as cotton? Have we adjusted the intellectual proper rights regime to allow the required favourable access vital technologies, as has been done for critic pharmaceuticals for HIV/AIDS?

Have we been mitigating the build-up greenhouse gasses, thereby reducing the challeng related to climate change, such as droughts and flooc or assisting the adaptation efforts by African countrie especially in agriculture? Have we re-engineered a streamlined our processes for aid delivery to ma them more supportive of institution-building a capacity-development in Africa, and to make the more effective, less costly and less demanding on t scarce policy, technical and administrative resources African States? Have we increased the flexibility a predictability of our assistance, so as to encourage a facilitate longer-term planning by African State Critically, in our assistance and support policy a

practice have we moved away from the proverbial periodic provision of a fish to Africa to aid Africa's relearning of how to fish in the large African pond?

If the answer to all or most of those questions is in the negative — and the Group of 77 suspects that that is the case — then the nature of our conclusions, the determinations of this high-level meeting and, in fact, our declaration, will be clear.

The Group of 77 and China's analysis of our draft declaration and the process leading to it suggests that we have not yet fully grasped the need for urgency, certainty and comprehensiveness in our response to Africa's development needs. We hope that by the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly there will be a strong mechanism in place to monitor our commitments, so that we can assist Africa in advancing its development and achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3208 (XXIX) of 11 October 1974, I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission.

Mr. Barroso (European Commission) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for this initiative and for his report (A/63/130). On behalf of the European Commission, I would like to welcome all the efforts that have been made to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The year 2008 should not only leave us the memory of a year of fresh commitments to the developing world on the part of the international community; 2008 should also been seen as a time when we agreed to fulfil our promises more concretely and expeditiously in a new spirit of partnership.

As President Sarkozy, as President of the Council of the European Union has said so clearly, the European Union is a world actor, particularly committed to helping all developing countries. The European Union provides 60 per cent of international aid. Our relationship with Africa is unique: we are bound by history, geography, trade and our languages. By adopting the Joint Africa-European Union Strategy in Lisbon in December 2007, we opened a new chapter in our relationship. That chapter takes into account the new economic, political and social realities, but it is also intended to go beyond the traditional areas of development to include global matters, in other words the challenges of today.

May I refer very briefly to three of those major challenges: the price of food, climate change and energy security.

(*spoke in English*)

Firstly, with regard to rising food prices in the world, action is needed to support agriculture in developing countries to enable African farmers to grow more food for Africans. We have already stepped in with short-term measures worth an additional €550 million in 2008, and with a further €250 million to come in 2009. Now, the European Commission has proposed a new €1-billion food facility, promoting agricultural production by improving poor farmers' access to inputs such as fertilizers and seed. That is fully in line with Africa's own objectives for developing agriculture, and I hope the facility will soon be agreed upon within the European Union.

Secondly, climate change is hitting the poorest countries of the world hardest with severe droughts, desertification, lack of water and other natural disasters. Climate change threatens to undermine the promising African growth rates of 6 per cent and could present a major threat to peace and security. The upcoming conferences in Poznan, Poland, at the end of 2008, and in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 2009 must be when we build a new international consensus.

To achieve that, it will be essential for Europe and Africa to work very closely together in the coming months to develop a strong partnership, based in particular on adaptation, the key question for Africa. It was with that in mind that the Commission launched the Global Climate Change Alliance between the European Union on the one hand, and poor and vulnerable developing countries on the other.

Another aspect of our partnership concerns the struggle against deforestation, which is a major concern in Africa. We have to prevent the illegal exploitation of rainforests and support the sustainable management of forests. A prime example of that is the forest partnership that is being established in the Congo basin.

The third area I mentioned is energy, where we must look to develop together a sustainable future. We need to establish energy security for both continents, better interconnections both between and within Africa

and Europe, and better governance and use of oil and gas revenues. Finally, we must cooperate closely to tackle the interlinked issues of poverty, deforestation and climate change. All of those issues will be addressed in the Africa-European Union Energy Partnership, launched last year.

In conclusion, let me stress one point. I am proud of the European Union's record in working together with Africa on the crucial mission of development. The Commission is doing everything in its power to help achieve the MDG targets. But, the reality is that Africa is getting onto its own two feet, building stronger rates of growth, using its rich natural resources more effectively, and strengthening good governance. When we in Europe say that we want to be partners with Africa, we will continue to bear our responsibilities, but Africa's future must ultimately lie in African hands. That requires us to work closer together to tackle global problems that recognize no frontiers, but I am confident that we will now do so in a real spirit of partnership.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 2011 (XX) of 11 October 1965 and decision 56/475 of 15 August 2002, I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping, Chairman of the African Union Commission and former President of the General Assembly.

Mr. Ping (African Union) (*spoke in French*): Today, as the countries of the African continent come together, I should like to associate myself with the wise words of Mr. Jakaya Kikwete, current Chairman of the African Union, and will not revisit the major questions raised by him. I would also like to join all those who have spoken before me in welcoming the Secretary-General's initiative to hold this meeting.

Far from being just another meeting, today's gathering provides us with an excellent platform for mobilization and the sharing of experiences. Africa, the cradle of humankind, fully deserves the attention of the international community, especially given that it has suffered the injustice of history and continues to experience its consequences. However, our experience has enriched and matured us and bestowed upon us a priceless heritage of values. Wisdom teaches us to appreciate the added value of fruitful contact with other civilizations and international cooperation. Our rightful duty is therefore to ensure that the partnership for development serves as a defining factor in our search for peace, co-existence and a better life for all.

We should like to make the African continent a continent like all the others — free from fear and want. I need not recall here the commitments entered into in various forums throughout the years that are enshrined in numerous international instruments. Africa's development needs are well known and recognized — whether as regards combating such societal scourges as the HIV/AIDS pandemic, tuberculosis and malaria; combating poverty; or addressing the issues of food security, hunger, agricultural and industrial development, financing for development and regional and subregional integration. Once again, President Kikwete referred to all those matters. Today we all speak as one. The time has come for implementation.

Beyond all the fine words, we need a firm timetable, genuine funding commitments, a tangible partnership, innovative strategies and effective leaders in the development effort. We need to achieve. Above all, we need confidence in the African Union and its leadership on the continent, as well as in its undertakings. We also need to trust our partners, in particular the United Nations, of which we are proud to be a crucial part.

We Africans are primarily responsible for Africa's development. Carrying out the agenda for Africa is first and foremost up to us. We intend to take full responsibility for it. It is that very spirit of ownership that led African leaders to establish the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The African Union is resolutely implementing that initiative, for which it has established a funding strategy and identified specific projects. NEPAD and the African Peer Review Mechanism reflect the continent's desire to take control of its own destiny.

Progress has been achieved, but the better part is yet to be done: the effective implementation of commitments, the transformation of decisions into action and the evaluation of achievements. The pioneering continent-wide undertaking that is NEPAD depends upon two key factors: financing and political resolve. In that regard, it is worth recalling that the 10-year capacity-building programme for the African Union, which was launched in November 2006, emphasizes the mobilization of resources and the coordination of efforts by United Nations agencies working in Africa. As we advocate system-wide

coherence and move towards integration, we in the African Union are also choosing to harmonize decisions and initiatives, to share skills and to rationalize needs.

We all know that political stability on the continent would facilitate the mobilization of the resources needed in our tireless fight against poverty. We all know that peace and security are necessary for sustainable development. The African Union has not hesitated to move ahead with the establishment of its peace and security structures. The African Union is steadfastly committed to peacekeeping operations on the continent. The African Union has emphasized conflict prevention in setting up its various bodies and mechanisms. We are now setting up our development structures to meet the needs and expectations of our peoples.

In all instances, the peace, security and development of Africa require stepped up international cooperation. For our part, we enthusiastically welcome the specific proposals of the Secretary-General contained in his report (A/63/130) entitled "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward", which was issued on 15 July 2008. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the joint strategy and action plan agreed with the European Union in December 2007. We also welcome, among other things, the strategic partnerships created with Japan through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development process, as well as with China, India, Turkey, the countries of South America, and the United States of America through the African Growth and Opportunity Act. Lastly, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all who have provided unflagging support for us at both the bilateral and multilateral levels.

At a time when general mobilization is needed to meet new challenges such as the food crisis, the energy crisis, climate change, the digital divide and others, we need to stand together, overcome our differences and emphasize dialogue and the sharing of responsibilities, skills, successes, benefits and, above all, the satisfaction of having fulfilled our duty and nobly served our peoples.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker for this meeting. I would like to remind members that round tables 1 and 2 will be held in the Trusteeship Council Chamber and the Economic and Social Council Chamber, respectively, immediately following the adjournment of this plenary meeting.

Round tables 3 and 4 will take place at 3 p.m., also in the Trusteeship Council Chamber and the Economic and Social Council Chamber, respectively. Members are reminded that round tables are closed meetings and only inscribed participants will be allowed into the conference rooms.

The closing plenary meeting will begin here in the General Assembly Hall at 6.10 p.m. so that we may take action on draft resolution A/63/L.1, entitled "Political declaration on Africa's development needs".

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.